

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words but a Video is Worth More by **longhairedtae12**

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Summary:

Being six floors below ground also meant that there was no chance to know freedom. A foreign concept to the girl. A term she learnt the second week of November. A concept she would never be able experience again.

The boys get ahold of security tapes from Hawkins lab while Eleven was still there.

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words but a Video is Worth More

Author's Note:

HIHIHI

This is my first ever fanfic so I'll tell you now, it's not going to be very good. I have fallen absolutely in love with this show and I just couldn't not write something so here goes. I'm also writing this really late at night time so if some of it doesn't make sense, I apologise (I will edit to my best capabilities. I hope you guys enjoy!!

PS. It's currently 1:15 so the grammar and word order might not make sense but I'll work in it tomorrow. Also, there isn't going to be another chapter BUT in working on another fic and I've got the first three chapters planned!

P.S. I'M WORKING ON SOMETHING ELSE WHICH SHOULD BE OUT SOON!!!!

Hawkins Lab, being their unpredictable selves as usual, handed him the tapes for the last eleven years and nine months. Tapes for test room A, 61, 62 and 63 as well as rooms 6105, 6302 and hallway 6F. The only places that a young girl with a shaved head ever saw. A young girl who had lived precisely for eleven years and nine months. Being six floors below ground also meant that there was no chance to know freedom. A foreign concept to the girl. A term she learnt the second week of November. A concept she would never be able experience again.

Sitting back in his shithole of a trailer, he stared at the cardboard box of tapes the lab-coats gave him in the car back at the hospital almost two months ago. He still hasn't worked up the courage to touch any of them let alone watching them. His guilt for that little girl that

looked like Sarah was already splintering his heart. Remembering what he did to her, what he told Brenner made him like he killed her. Almost as if he had given Sarah the cancer that had killed her. The fear in the girl's eyes. How wide they were with fear of everything she didn't know, which was a lot. Her shaved head. The way she was made to genderless. She wasn't human enough to have a gender. Like a saltshaker back at Benny's old place. The sharpness of her frame, the fingers that gripped his and Joyce's arms like her lifeline back to the land of the living. Her grip wasn't even strong enough to crack an egg. The malnutrition made blatantly obvious in that moment. Her knees the definition of bony, bobbed in and out of the water of their temporary isolation tank in the frozen school gymnasium at Hawkins Middle School. There was nothing on her bones except the bit of flesh and muscle that made her the eleven-year-old girl she was.

Staring at the tapes now caused a physical pain in his chest, one that pulled him out of his own head and brought him back to 1984. When the men had given him the tapes, he thought they were a bomb, that they were getting ready to kill him. He's still surprised they haven't yet. He considered them more of the type to stab you in the back rather than keep a promise but he was more than happy for them to present themselves as the latter.

The boys were hit hardest my El's death. Not knowing anything except that she destroyed the Demogorgan and in the process, herself. They don't have the tapes he does. They can't go and watch their friend on the TV. She's gone. Joyce has called him over on multiple occasions to try and calm down both Will and Jonathan after nightmares caused by the events during the second week of November. Will being haunted by his week in the Upside Down and Jonathan being chased into consciousness by the petal-faced monster that Wheeler's sister, the kid the head of hair and Jonathan all fought within the confines of the Byers house.

The other boy's parents didn't know about anything that had unfolded back in November, which left the other three alone at night when they bolted into a sitting position covered in sweat and the lingering sensation of tears. The Wheeler siblings had each other thank god but Hopper could only think about how the other boys must survive on the little sleep that manage to convince their bodies

to give them.

In regard to the isolation from the rest of their families, the new hangout had transferred from Mike's basement to either Joyce's living room or the deck looking out at the lake behind Hopper's trailer. He didn't know how this became a regular thing but he didn't mind, having the boys around subdued his guilt. Knowing that he was able to save Will. He couldn't take credit for the other boys being alive, but he could take credit for Will, which was something that thawed his heart a little.

Taking a break from staring at the box, which was staring right back at him, he picked up his pack of Camels and strode out to the back deck and lit one in the mid-day sun. Work had been quiet as usual. No missing kids, no mysterious kids with shaved heads, no "suicides". The light reflected off the water and he could see himself peering down into the unknown. A place that scared him more than the Upside Down had. The unknown held all of the questions that he was asking himself daily and ones that he refused to ask even though they were there. Trying so hard to pretend they don't exist. The biggest unknown for him right now being, 'what the hell was wrong with Will?' The boy is either eating like he's never eaten before or he goes without a single bite for two days at a time. He's lost five pounds in the last two months and no matter what Joyce and Hopper try, they just can't get the weight back on him. He just stares blank faced at things for minutes at a time and when he snaps back to reality, he acts like he was listening the whole time, as if he doesn't take notice of the time lost. Jonathan had been handling himself better than his younger sibling but he also hides fifty percent of what goes on in that head of his.

The thumping on the door forces Hopper to throw the cigarette into the lake. He's tried to quit smoking but when things get tense, he can't help himself. Thinking about the little girl with the shaved head was one of those stressors.

Swinging the door open, he comes face to face with Joyce Byers. Face to face isn't exactly accurate as he was a whole head taller than her. All four boys standing behind her. Using her as a shield in case he was in one of his bad moods. Generally he only fell into those moods after thinking about what he could have done differently on the night

of November 11th.

Skirting over all of the boys faces before coming to once again rest on Joyce's features, he gruffly acknowledges them, "come in", just loud enough for them to hear.

The boys surge past Joyce and Hopper right through into his living room and start to set up their game of D&D while he continues to stare at Joyce Byers.

"You sure this is okay? I don't want to overwhelm you with kids as badly behaved as these ones" she laughed jokingly in a way only someone who was filled with affection could.

"It's fine, you just need an afternoon to catch up on rest," he says in response, noting the dark smudges under her eyes and in the hollows of her cheekbones. Stressing over Will hasn't helped the case much either on top of all of her extra work hours. He can feel the stress coming off her in waves. Hitting and surrounding anything and everything it comes into contact with.

"Go home Joyce, sleep. You need it, trust me," He finishes off with a chuckle.

"Fine. Fine. I'm gone, give me a call when you've had enough of them invading your living room." Turning her back to Hopper, she makes her way down the steps and into the car, giving a quick wave before pulling a U-turn and driving out the way she came.

Shit

The tapes. The boys. Oh god.

"Chief" comes the Wheeler boy, "what are these?" He asks. The anxiety clear in his voice that is still yet to drop to an octave below.

Shutting the door a little harder than intended, he turns on the back of his heel and takes a step before stopping mid stride

Shit

"Chief, what is this stuff?" Asks Dustin. His voice almost a whisper.

The anxiety was a palpable being that was dragging down on all of them.

“You have tapes and you didn’t *tell* us? How could you not tell us?” Mike almost yelled. Hopper could see the fury in the boy’s eyes. The others looking angry and betrayed but not like Mike. Mike looked like her could murder Hopper there and then.

“WHY DIDN’T YOU TELL US? WHY DIDN’T YOU TELL ME?” He screamed. His fisted hands shaking. In that moment, Hopper just felt bad for the kid. He knew what it felt like to lose someone who meant everything to you. She may have only been around for a week but she sure as shit had left in imprint on these boys. On Mike. He couldn’t say she hadn’t done the same to him but her impact on the group still impressed him. Her shaved head and eyes full of horrors had drawn these boys in entirely.

“You need to calm down kid, you can’t be watching those, they won’t change or help anything.”

“I. Don’t. CARE! There is nothing of her except those! NOTHING!” he yelled in response. The place wasn’t bugged but it was still too risky to be shouting crap like this.

“Kid you need to calm down. If you don’t, those bad men come back and then we’re all screwed.”

“Who CARES! They can’t do anything, she’s GONE!”

“Mike, man, calm down, the Chief’s right, what if they come back and take the tapes before we can watch them?” As much as Hopper was grateful for the help from Dustin, it wasn’t quite the direction he was hoping that conversation would take. Not the most helpful either.

“You boys are *not* watching those tapes.”

“You can’t do that, she was *our* friend. We deserve to watch them.” Lucas fired back. Not what Hopper was expecting from the kid that had been quiet thus far.

“If I let you watch those tapes, you all get dragged into the shit I

managed to get you kids out of and I don't need to deal with that again." The stress of them even knowing about it all was enough for him let alone having them watching those tapes. They'll be scared. He can only imagine what they did to that girl. The things that are on those tapes aren't meant to ever be seen let alone actually happen.

"You let us watch those tapes or I march myself up to Hawkins Lab and ask for a copy of them myself." Mike replied. His eyes cold, watching Hopper with a calculating look, watching for his reaction on what Mike had just said.

"We'll march up there with him too." Added Dustin.

Will who hadn't said anything and who had just been staring down at the box of tapes the entire time looked up at Dustin's comment. A blank expression transforming into one of agreement for the boy's comment.

"Your mum will murder me if you step foot anywhere that shithole" He murmured almost to himself. Goddamn these kids. If they weren't bluffing, he was in deep shit from all parties involved.

"Get the first one," he growled at the Wheeler boy who betrayed a look of fear and pride. Being able to beat the Chief at his own game but terrified at what he was about to watch. The tape handed to him was labeled '21/01/82 – Test Room 61: Live Subject'. Oh God. What was he getting them into?

"Eleven," Everyone in the room stiffened instantly. The voice instructing the girl Hopper had come to know as El. A cold voice that belonged to the one and only, Dr. Martin Brenner.

"Do it now." Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Mike's hands curl into fists, Dustin's shoulders rose up and Lucas started cracking his knuckles as if preparing for a fight.

"Please Papa." Her fear presenting itself in every way the human body can without declaring itself in words. She above and behind the camera to where he assumed all of the scientists including Brenner were watching her from.

He had been so focused on the girl at the table that he had missed the bundle that had been placed in front of her on the metal table.

“Shit” All of the boys whipped their heads towards Hopper. His comment gaining the attention for a millisecond.

“Guys, what’s that in front of her?” Dustin asked. Hopper knew immediately that Dustin knew what it was but didn’t want to be right about it.

“It’s...It’s a...a *baby*” Lucas had tears in his eyes and Dustin was just shaking from the shock of what he was seeing. Mike had a fury in his eye’s that scared Hopper a little. It scared him because he had known that fury and it had nearly destroyed him and the people around him. A fury, he knew was justified in every way. Will sat there, eyes wide staring at the TV. Not believing what he was witnessing. Hopper himself couldn’t properly comprehend what he was seeing. He knew that they had done horrible things to her but this wasn’t something even the person with the best imagination could come up with.

Her scalp was covered in electrodes that were there for measuring her brainwaves when she used her abilities.

The baby squirmed. It was fully conscious and aware of its surroundings. Looking up at El inquisitively. Unaware of danger she was surrounded by. There were tears in El’s eyes that kept building.

“Do it Eleven. Now. I have no patience for this today.”

That pig.

The guilt of nearly handing her back over to this man weighed on him more than it ever had before. He nearly gave her back to this monster. He was almost glad that she had found death rather than Brenner. Hopper blinked a couple of times, trying to hydrate his eyes after staring at the screen without blinking for so long.

She focuses in on the newborn baby. Tears were running down Eleven’s cheeks. One after the other in a constant stream of agony. The young girl’s chin wobbled as the baby started to cry. The trademark nosebleed had hit El and there was blood flowing from

both nostrils as well as her ears.

All of the boys, including Hopper, had unconsciously leaned in closer to the TV waiting for was going to happen next.

The baby started wailing before Eleven slumped back in her chair and dazedly pulled off the headpiece. The veins in her face looking like electricity beneath her translucent skin. The girl's eyes rolling into the back of her head but not losing full consciousness.

Glancing over at the boys, all of their faces, including Will's, have tear trails that run all the way to their chins. Before the security footage is over, six security men plus Brenner enter the room.

"You didn't do what you were told, now these bad men will have to take you back to the dark room." Standing over her, he put his hand to the side of her head and smudged the blood coming from her left ear before dropping his hand and walking over to the corner so that the security guards can grab her in lift her out of the chair.

"Please Papa" Eleven whimpers. A sound that Hopper has never, ever heard out of anyone, not even a child. Not even from Sarah in her final days. A sound of just pure and unglorified fear. A single tear made it down the right side of Hopper's face. He hadn't cried since the day Sarah had died, not a single tear and here he was crying for a girl he hadn't even know for four hours.

"Papa, please I'll be good" She was starting to wake again. Whether it was because she had recovered a little or from the fear of where she was going. Lifting her completely out of her chair and dragging her through the door way, the two men that carried her and three that surrounded her covered her from the camera as they dragged out of the lab leaving just the baby and Brenner.

"PAPA! NO PAPA!" That's all that's left of Eleven on the tape. Her screams for Papa getting further and further away.

Brenner looking completely indifferent, swiftly walks to the table, picks up the now crying bundle of life and walks right out of the lab.

He couldn't watch anymore of that. He couldn't watch that and then

not do anything.

“That’s enough for a long while” he told them all. Hoping that they had seen plenty for a lifetime.

“No.”

“What?”

“I said *no*” Mike announced. “I *need* to know what the dark room is, I just...ugh can we just watch the security footage for the hallway, please.”

The tears already present on the kids face didn’t help his argument. Hopper didn’t think any of the boys could take much more of this. Will who hadn’t even met her had tears rolling down his face.

“Why do you want to torture yourself kid?” Looking at the four boys faces, he didn’t understand why they would do this to themselves.

“We owe it to her” Lucas piped up.

“She made Troy pee himself, and broke his arm,” Hopper glared at him, “we should at least try to understand her better and learn more about her so we can honour her memory better.”

“What about you Wheeler, why do you want to watch these horror films?”

With a sigh and a second or two of mumbling to himself, responds to Hopper without looking him directly in the eyes.

“When I found her after hiding in my closet, she was collapsed on the floor of my wardrobe crying and I had no idea why, I want to know why now.”

Goddammit.

“Last one and then we are done here, you go back to your board game—

“It’s not a boardgame—“ Dustin cut hopper off

“Whatever it is, you go back to it after this last tape, and you don’t tell anyone about these. Deal?”

All as one, they mumble in reply “yes chief” before wiping at their eyes and try and make themselves look as if they didn’t just watch one of their closest friends get tortured.

“Pass the tape over before I rethink this whole rearrangement” Hopper almost snarls at them. Will reaches over the arm of the chair to reach inside the box and grab the tape labeled ‘21/01/82 – Hallway 6F/6105:Test Failed_DarkRoom’.

Putting the first VHS back into its box and handing it over to Will, he inserted the second one which started immediately like the first one had. This tape is different from the first. The screen is halved so that one camera is looking at the hallway and one is looking at a dimly lit room with a single light bulb that is hung just high enough that a small, under developed 10-year-old girl couldn’t reach. It’s the size of about 1.5m x 1.5m and every surface is black.

You can hear her before you see her, entering the camera’s view after about ten seconds of hearing her screaming for ‘Papa’. Looking at the boys, Mike looks like he’s about to smash the TV and go on a rampage destroying everything within reach. Dustin and Lucas looking just as angry as Mike does but less violent, thank God. Hopper wasn’t sure he could deal with three violent boys.

Will was sitting there, shaking with a mixture of anger, shock and disbelief. He had never met El. Had never seen that pain and fear that permanently marred her face. The darkness that stared out through her round, hazel eyes. He never saw that haunted look that she wore like a winter coat. He had never heard her story, not from her directly.

Once she’s in the hallway’s camera’s line of sight, you can see her legs kicking and flailing in the air and her whole body squirming and wriggling in the grips of the men carrying her. She manages to kick on of them in face, which earns a shout from Dustin and a choked laugh from Mike. Her shouts for Papa don’t change in strength at all. Brenner can’t be seen in the camera but El is twisting her head around so she’s able to scream at Brenner while she’s looking at him,

pleading with not only her words, but her eyes too. It doesn't change anything though. The bad men keep dragging her down the hallway and she screams and screams and struggles and squirms. Getting blood over the white uniforms of the men carrying her. The blood from her ears and nose transferring onto their white, crisp uniform sleeves.

The boys have only gotten angrier when Hopper glances over. Mike has tears running down his face, breathing heavy with his hands balled into even tighter fists, which looks like he's crushing his own fingers. Dustin and Lucas were sitting right on the edge of the couch, inching closer and closer as if Eleven is going to jump right out of the TV and into all of their laps. Will's face has gone completely white and he looked like he was about to vomit.

Hopper didn't understand how you could look at this little 10-year-old girl and feel okay dragging her to her own hell while she's kicking and screaming and then go home and sleep throughout the whole goddamn night. He was disgusted by everything they were doing this young girl. What *he* did to this young girl. He already knows where this tape is going but when it happens, it still manages to shatter his heart a little more.

The men come to stop before opening a big, reinforced metal door that leads to the 1.5m x 1.5m room.

The white coats get a better hold of Eleven before throwing her into the room and slamming the door shut before she has time to recover. On the right hand side of the TV, the camera in the "Dark Room" showed Eleven banging on the door as loud as she could, her screams turning into yells which turned into whispers for her "Papa". Hopper watched her crumple to the floor from sheer exhaustion and curl up into a ball as the light went out, courtesy of the lab coat scientists. For about two minutes, the only thing you can hear are the quiet whimpers of Eleven before it evens out into shallow breathing that is the sign of sleep.

"I think I'm gonna be sick" Will said before running to Hopper's bathroom and emptying the contents of his stomach which wasn't much due to him being on one of his "no food weeks". Mike just sat there staring at the now static television. Not blinking, not even

twitching. His chest rising up occasionally as if he thought breathing as an optional, back of the minds task. A couple of tears breaking lose and making their way to the bottom of chin.

Dustin and Lucas begin to mumble between each other, wiping at their leaky noses as the tears snake across their freshly darkened skin from the sun being out for the last two weeks.

“Chief, I think there’s someone outside, I saw them through the bathroom window.”

He wasn’t expecting anyone, Joyce isn’t meant to come pick them up until eight. Glancing over at the boys, Hopper gets up and in four big strides, makes it to the door. As he reaches over to open it, it slams open, knocking to ground. The boys start yelling and shouting and he hears glass smash but nothing’s processing properly. One minute, he’s on the floor after being smashed in the head by his front door and the next he’s being lifted up into a standing position and having handcuffs placed on him.

Glancing over at the boys to make sure they haven’t been hurt in the invasion, he notices that they aren’t bound but it’s two guards to one boy. Hopper follows their wide eyes to his front door where Dr. Brenner is standing in the doorway. Not a single different thing about him since he last saw him when they made the deal and he handed Eleven over.

“It seems you can’t stick to your deals Hopper.”

Author's Note:

I hope you guys liked it, please PLEASE give feedback in the comments, I hope you enjoyed it!!! I'll hopefully get to write more one-shots soon but I need ideas. If you have any requests, you can send them to my tumblr at <http://stranger-from->

hawkins.tumblr.com/ (gotta get the promo in there
ahahaha).